

Guidelines for admission to state-supported postsecondary education institutions in Kentucky



An overview of proposed changes to Administrative Regulation 13 KAR 2:020

What is covered under this regulation?

This regulation establishes minimum admission requirements for entering Kentucky's public colleges and universities along with conditional admissions qualifications, transfer admissions and advising obligations, and dual credit provisions. It also establishes institutional responsibilities for mandatory assessment and placement of students who enter postsecondary institutions underprepared for college-level work.

Why are the changes necessary?

The regulation was last revised in 2000. Since that time the Kentucky Board of Education has approved a new, more rigorous high school curriculum. Also, new research that predicts student success in college courses is based on their level of preparation as entering students is available from both Kentucky's public college and university faculty and from ACT. The February 2007 report, *Securing Kentucky's Future: A Plan for Improving College Readiness and Success*, recommends several changes in the assessment and placement regulations to provide more support for underprepared first-time college students. Changes in the structure of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System and in Council documents have also occurred and should be captured in this administrative regulation update.

What main changes are proposed?

Standards of mathematics readiness for college mathematics are increasing from 18 to 19 on the ACT mathematics subscore, and reading readiness standards are increasing from 18 to 21. The provisions of the Kentucky Public Postsecondary Placement Policy are being added to the regulation to stipulate that students scoring at or above the college readiness standards must be placed in credit-bearing courses. Section 6, Mandatory Assessment and Placement of Students, will now require that underprepared students be given a subject placement test, be provided developmental support during their first term of enrollment, be required to continue developmental programs until they have demonstrated competence in the subject area, and be placed in college-level coursework immediately following completion of their developmental courses.

When will the proposed changes take effect?

It is anticipated that the regulation will be approved in late 2007 with changes to be effective beginning fall 2009 to give colleges, students, and parents time to accommodate to the new standards. These changes will take effect after anticipated funds for infrastructure improvements in developmental education have been distributed in July 2008. Kentucky high school graduates entering postsecondary institutions in fall 2009 would have completed the mandatory ACT in their junior year during 2007-08 testing.

How will the change in readiness thresholds affect the number of underprepared students requiring help?

The proposed increase in the mathematics readiness standard to 19 would have meant that an additional 1,634 students of the 2004 total cohort were underprepared, or 50.7 percent of the incoming cohort compared to 42.5 percent at 18.

The proposed increase in the reading readiness standard to 21 would have meant that an additional 4,226 students of the 2004 total cohort were underprepared, or 47.8 percent of the incoming cohort compared to 26.6 percent at 18.

What if a student scores below the thresholds on the newly required ACT in their junior year of high school?

A student who scores below the statewide standard of readiness as a junior and who participates in accelerated learning assistance available through their individual learning plan is permitted to take the ACT exam a second time, at the expense of the Kentucky Department of Education. Once they are admitted to a public postsecondary institution, they will receive placement tests for the subject areas where they are underprepared. Improved scores on the second ACT exam or on placement tests resulting from high school interventions in the senior year could move the student to credit-bearing courses when they begin college. For students who remain below the minimum thresholds, institutions will determine the best type of intervention, such as summer bridge programs, online tutorials, remedial courses, or college-level courses with supplemental instruction to help students improve their academic preparation and skills, allowing many students to move quicker into credit-bearing coursework. Equally important, students who score above the readiness standards are guaranteed placement in credit-bearing courses.

What are the benefits to the students?

While more students may require developmental education or supplemental instruction, students who do receive the help guaranteed by this change will have a much better chance of actually leaving college with a degree. The Council's previous reports clearly show that students who fall below the state readiness standards are twice as likely to pay for the first year of college and not make it to the second.

What are the benefits to teachers and parents?

As early as middle school, teachers and parents will know if students are on track to be ready for college through student scores on ACT EPAS assessments - in time to help students accelerate their learning. Even after the ACT is administered to high school juniors, parents and teachers can help ensure the senior year is targeted to areas in need of improvement. By taking the ACT again in the senior year (at state expense) or scoring well on placement tests once in college, students can enroll in credit-bearing courses.

In addition, the changes in the way developmental education will be offered will allow students options that may not require a full semester of developmental work. In the final analysis, however, if a student needs developmental help, parents can be better assured their students will receive high-quality help and that the money they spend on the first year of college will be used to give their students what they need to return the second year and leave with a degree.

These changes bring together extensive work by the faculty of Kentucky's postsecondary institutions, the Developmental Education Task Force, the Council's reports on the college performance of underprepared students, and the American Diploma Project initiatives. These changes affirm ACT's recommended standards for college readiness and supporting national research in best practice for developmental education. This regulation stipulates the additional help that institutions must provide to support underprepared students.

How are these changes made?

Kentucky's administrative regulation changes are overseen by the Legislative Research Commission. The process is initiated by Council approval of the revised regulation. The Council staff has collected feedback on the proposed changes from educational stakeholders in revising the regulation.

Is there more information available?

The proposed regulation is available at
<http://cpe.ky.gov/about/cpe/meetings/2007/May+212007CPEMeetingAgenda.htm>

